

In the specification:

Please insert the following new paragraph on page 1, between lines 1 and 2, directly following the title of the invention.

-- This application is the national stage application of PCT EP00/02718, filed March 28, 2000 designating the United States. --

The paragraph starting on page 3, line 26 has been amended and now reads as follows:

-- In conclusion the present invention relates to a method to obtain fetal cells from maternal blood, comprising the following steps:

a. maternal blood (25ml) obtained from an antecubital vein of the arm is transferred into non-physiological tissue culture medium;

b. an aqueous solution of Na citrate, citric acid and ~~dextran~~ dextrose is immediately added;

c. maternal blood as diluted in a. and b. is introduced into a separation device, immediately followed by the introduction of a solution having an higher density than maternal blood, containing a RBCs aggregating agent (Ficoll);

d. nucleated cells having a lower density than the liquid introduced below maternal blood in the separation device, are isolated by a single discontinuous density gradient centrifugation;

e. nucleated cells, isolated by the previous step, are washed in phosphate buffered saline, transferred in tissue culture media and placed in a CO₂ incubator to regain physiological cell metabolism;

f. fetal cells present in the isolated cell fraction are recognized by appropriate procedure and counted. --

The paragraph starting on page 9, line 2-12, which reads "Immediately after, . . . mg/dl.," has been amended and now reads as follows:

-- Immediately after, 5 ml of an aqueous solution are added, containing citric acid 1g/125 ml, Na citrate 2.25g/125ml and ~~dextran~~ dextrose 3g/125 ml, thus obtaining the following non-physiological conditions

pH	6.5	
Osmolality	320	mOsm/l
Na	165	mmol/l
K	5.35	mmol/l
Cl	110	mmol/l
Ca	1.25	mmol/l
glucose	500	mg/dl
lactate	10	mg/dl. --